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# KAAHUMANU'S TREASURE LIES IN A KONA CAVE

## Spanish Dollars, Hidden Away for Benevolence, Which Are Yet to Be Uncovered.

"What do you think of those treasure  
yarns of Capt. Walker and Capt.  
Blanchard?" asked the old mariner.  
"Isn't it queer that these lone islands,  
where the doubloons are cached by the  
shipwrecked mariners are always situ-  
ated some thousands of miles away  
from the spot where the possessor of  
the secret happens to be? Yes, that's  
so; there was that expedition which  
was fitted out in San Francisco last  
year and touched at Honolulu. They  
were on to a sure thing, but just at  
present they are fighting in the Syd-  
ney law courts about the schooner  
which was to carry them to the desert  
island. The lawyers, like those near  
at hand, are the only fellows that are  
making anything out of the scheme."

"However, that reminds me that  
there is no necessity for going so far as  
Juan Fernandez, Palmyra Island or  
even R. L. Stevenson's treasure island.  
I can put you on to a good thing, near-  
er to hand, but you mustn't give it  
away. As soon as sugar goes up, I  
expect to get back some of my good  
United States gold coin and I'll then  
make a bee line and unearth the six-  
teen to one stuff. And I'll be pretty  
well prepared for tackling the job, as  
the man that undertakes to secure the  
coin has got a lot of lava tunnelling  
to do, and during the last few years  
I've been getting pointers in that line  
at Kihel, McBryde and Oahu coal  
mines—I mean sugar plantations."

"Well, it's rather a long story, but it  
happened this way, don't you see. I  
struck these islands way back in 1870.  
Arrived on the steamer Wonga Wonga  
which used to trade up and down be-  
tween the coast and Australia. I had  
considerable coin with me and was do-  
ing a bit of sight-seeing on my way  
around the world. I knocked around  
Honolulu for a while until June, 1871,  
and then went up to Hilo, saw the Vol-  
cano and rode down to Punaluu where  
I took passage on board a pulu laden  
schooner bound for Honolulu. We got  
becalmed under the lee of Mauna Loa  
and after drifting about for a week  
or so our water gave out and we were  
forced at length to launch our dingy  
and pull in shore to Kealahou Bay.  
In order to get a supply of water. As  
I was tired of the monotony on board  
the schooner, I determined to land at  
Kealahou and continue the journey  
later on. I put up with the only white  
man on the beach, an old Englishman,  
one of the real old timers, who had  
lived over forty years on Hawaii and  
most of that period in the Kona dis-  
trict. After our supper of poi and dried  
opelu, moistened with a little okole-  
hao, the natural light wine of the coun-  
try, we began talking about things in  
general, and at last got on to the sub-  
ject of the caves which I had noticed  
that afternoon on the face of the steep  
cliff overhanging the bay."

"Well, the old boy told me a lot about  
the different caves he had explored,  
some of them at Waimea being of vast  
extent and used since time immem-  
orial as places of burial; others at Ke-  
kaha, the Lanikaia cave at Kailua,  
and others again south from Kaawaloa  
all along the coast as far as Kau.  
About midnight the old man began to  
feel the effects of the okolehao and had  
got to look upon me as a long lost  
brother. It was at this stake that he  
told me of how he got to know about a  
certain cave where a lot of money  
was hidden."

"Soon after the old man ran away  
from his ship at Lahaina, he drifted up  
to Kailua on Hawaii. At that time  
there were very few white men in the  
Kona district, and what ones there  
were, not counting the missionaries,  
lived in native fashion. He soon be-  
came the sworn friend or aikane of  
an elderly native who had formerly  
been puuku or treasurer for Queen  
Kaahumanu, regent of the kingdom  
and one of the widows of Kamehameha  
the First. Kamehameha was a shrewd  
chief and was a good hand at money  
making. Through the bartering of  
supplies to visiting trading vessels and  
also by shipping sandal wood to China,  
he had acquired quite an extensive col-  
lection of muskets, furniture, dress  
goods and clothing and last but not  
least of Mexican and Spanish dollars."

"After his death most of the miscel-  
laneous property fell into his son Li-  
hohlo's hands, but the dollars somehow  
or other were seized by Kaahu-  
manu, his principal wife, and she man-  
aged to secrete the old warrior's pile in  
one of the valleys to the east of Hon-  
olulu. After Kamehameha's death,  
Kaahumanu reigned as kuhina nui or

governor until her death in 1832. For  
sometime after Kamehameha's death,  
Kaahumanu had been anxious to find  
a more secure depository for her treas-  
ure and at length her opportunity ar-  
rived."

"In 1824 Lord Byron arrived at Hon-  
olulu on board H. M. S. Blonde, with the  
bodies of King Lihohlo and Kama-  
malu, and after staying sometime in  
Honolulu, Byron decided to visit the  
large island in order to explore the  
volcano."

"Queen Kaahumanu asked for pas-  
sage for herself and retinue as far as  
Kailua. Her request was granted and  
she went on board, taking at the same  
time her beloved treasure and a retinue  
of about fifty men to guard the same.  
On arriving at Kailua the treasure  
which consisted of silver dollars, stored  
in calabashes, was transferred to a  
cave on land where it was guarded by  
sentinels day and night. Kaahumanu  
subsequently got the puuku or native  
treasurer to gradually transfer at night  
time, all the treasure to another cave  
situated in another part of the district  
and thus the hiding place came to be  
known only to Kaahumanu and the  
puuku."

"Kaahumanu was not a miser, but  
was hoarding up the money for what  
she believed was a laudable purpose.  
She had been converted to Christianity  
and was an enthusiastic supporter of  
the 'palapaia' and the missionaries.  
Her idea was to save up enough to  
help build churches in Honolulu, La-  
haina, Kailua, Waimea and all other  
chief centers of population throughout  
the islands. She could of course get  
most of the requisite materials, such  
as coral or lava blocks and rough lum-  
ber, for nothing by simply issuing an  
order to the principal chiefs to supply  
the same, but in order to get good win-  
dows with glass, doors, bells and other  
furnishings from Boston, she would  
need to provide a large sum in ready  
money. It was with this object in view  
therefore that she had been saving up  
for years."

"Kaahumanu as already said died  
in 1832 without having touched her  
hoard or attempting to carry out her  
plan, and at the time my beachcomber  
friend met the puuku or treasurer, the  
latter alone knew of the existence and  
locality of the great Kaahumanu  
treasure. The old beachcomber asked  
the puuku why he had not helped him-  
self to the money after Kaahumanu's  
death. But it appears that the puuku  
was only nominally a Christian and  
still clung to his old heathen super-  
stitions and was afraid that should he  
enter the dark cave and endeavor to  
take possession of the dollars he would  
be seized by the ghost of Kaahumanu  
and dragged to the lower regions. He  
had therefore up to the time of meet-  
ing the Englishman, neither attempt-  
ed to again enter the cave nor had  
he revealed the secret to any one else,  
until he had done so to his white  
aikane."

"The old English sailor learned from  
the puuku the exact situation of the  
cave and spot inside where the treasure  
lay concealed and when the puuku  
shortly afterward died, he visited the  
spot indicated and after some search  
found the narrow entrance to the  
cavern. He provided himself with a  
candle and drinking water and after  
painfully working his way along the  
cave and getting about half the dis-  
tance towards the spot where the pu-  
ku told him the treasure was hidden,  
he found that his path was completely  
barred by a lot of solid pahoeheo lava  
which had apparently been dislodged  
from the roof by an earthquake. He  
began to think the puuku had been let-  
ting his fancy run wild and cursed  
himself at having been fooled by a  
friend. He accordingly crawled out  
again and just when about three yards  
or so from the entrance he noticed  
something shining on the ground. On  
picking up the article he found it to be  
an old Spanish pillar dollar dated 1670."

"In better spirits he returned home,  
resolved to return again in the near  
future armed with proper implements  
and endeavor to force his way through  
the lava. As bad luck would have it,  
shortly after his visit to the cave he  
was attacked by rheumatism, the re-  
sult of early hardships and the rough  
life he had led for so many years. He  
was bed ridden for well nigh two years  
and after getting better, although he  
fully determined to make a second at-  
tempt, he had put it off from day to  
day without doing anything."

"This yarn of the old man naturally  
interested me very much, although I  
was inclined to believe that he was  
drawing the long bow. I stayed with  
him about two weeks, putting in the

time fishing in the bay and exploring  
the mountains. The old fellow would  
not take any recompense for his hospi-  
tality, so the only thing I could do  
was to present him with a fresh sup-  
ply of okolehao, which stuff seemed to  
do his rheumatics a lot of good."

"As I was about to take my departure  
for Honolulu, the old man said 'Look  
her, young fellow, I've taken a great  
liking to you, and I've been thinking  
to myself that I couldn't do better than  
put you on to the Kaahumanu dollars.  
They wouldn't do me any good anyhow,  
as I'm too old, and I've got no kids to  
leave them to.' He accordingly bade  
me sit down beside him on the lanai  
and described to me minutely the bear-  
ings of the cave. Like a good many  
English sailors of a previous genera-  
tion he could neither read nor write,  
but he had an excellent memory. Af-  
ter thanking him for his many kind-  
nesses, I bid him goodbye, got on board  
a canoe and was paddled off to a  
schooner which lay out in the bay."

"I soon forgot all about my old  
beachcomber friend and his tale of hid-  
den treasure, until about five years ago  
when I happened to be once more in  
Kona to look for a suitable ranch to  
grow coffee and vegetables for the San  
Francisco market. One evening after  
having tramped all day over endless  
oceans of aa and pahoeheo lava I found  
myself at Napoopoo on the other side  
of the bay where my old English friend  
had lived. Being in this locality re-  
called to memory the history of the  
Kaahumanu treasure, and I made up  
my mind to search for the cave. I did  
so, and did not succeed in locating the  
spot until after a toilsome exploration  
of the hot lava tract where I was led to  
believe the cave was situated. The  
natives passing along on donkeys or  
horseback when they caught sight of  
me out on the bare lava rocks wonder-  
ed what the haole pupule was up to.  
I quieted their inquisitiveness by show-  
ing a box compass slung over my  
shoulder and explaining to them that I  
was taking a preliminary survey for a  
new road which was to run from the  
beach to the upper government road.  
The narrow entrance to the cave was  
closed up with stones, but was discov-  
ered by bearings taken from a pecu-  
liarly shaped hummock of reddish col-  
ored lava to the right of the cave. I  
found the interior just as the old  
beachcomber had described it to me,  
the passage long, low and tortuous,  
with several side caves leading away  
into the breast of the mountain, and  
finally I came to the place where the  
lava blocked the way. Seeing that I  
would not be able to do anything fur-  
ther without the use of giant powder  
and drills, I wended my way back to  
Napoopoo, dreaming of the boundless  
wealth which I was soon to handle."

"Did I finally lay my hands on the  
coin? Now you're talking! I had just  
got back to the Chinese joint at Na-  
poopoo when the steamer for Honolulu  
came along with the news telephoned  
over from Hilo, that the Maine had  
been blown up, that war was declared  
and that the President had called for  
150,000 volunteers. I knew perfectly  
well that the treasure was quite safe  
where it was, in fact safer than if in a  
bank, so I thought I'd leave it where it  
was in the meantime and go and have  
a shot at the dagoes. I immediately  
boarded the steamer, caught the first  
boat for the Coast and enlisted in the  
California Volunteers. We were sent  
to Manila and after a lot of fighting  
and bush whacking we were paid off.  
Instead of returning with the regiment  
to the States I stayed behind in Ma-  
nila and left there about the same time  
as Volcano Marshall."

"What's that? I'm stuffing you?  
Well here you can see for yourself the  
same old 1670 Spanish dollar hanging  
to my watch chain that the old man  
gave me and what more do you want,  
and say by the bye, you don't happen  
to have on you such a thing as a five  
do you? Thanks, much obliged. Here's  
luck."

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